
IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 11, 1896.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WARREN presented the following:

**AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES BY THE
NATIONAL IRRIGATION CONGRESS, FOURTH ANNUAL SESSION,
AT ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX., SEPTEMBER 16-19, 1895.**

To the people of the United States:

The National Irrigation Congress, assembled in its fourth annual session at Albuquerque, N. Mex., in the valley of the Rio Grande, September 16-19, 1895, composed of delegates representing States and Territories west of the Mississippi, and also the States of Illinois, Wisconsin, New Jersey, and Minnesota, and including representatives of the Governments of Canada and of Mexico, sends greeting and announces the following statement of its views:

In the process of stupendous material expansion which has marked the history of the century now drawing to its close the American people have occupied practically the last acre of public land in the region where the natural rainfall suffices for successful agriculture. Beyond that occupied domain lies the vast territory commonly known as the arid region. About 93 per cent of the national population live east of the natural boundary which marks the western limitation of the region of assured rainfall. The fact is beyond dispute that the western half of the continent can readily sustain, upon a sound economic basis, a population at least as large as the present total number of inhabitants of the United States.

In view of the startling growth of great cities during the last decade, and the continued tendency of the people to desert the land and mass themselves in the already overcrowded and congested centers, and in view of the idleness and unrest which have resulted largely from these causes, it seems plain to us that the time has come for the American people to claim and occupy their last remaining heritage of public lands. In order to accomplish this, however, the nation must meet and solve problems peculiar to the environment of this vast region and essentially new to the Anglo-Saxon race. In so far as these problems have been solved by individual and local effort the result has demonstrated that our conditions admit of the highest degree of industrial independence and social equality yet realized by mankind.

Irrigation is the basis of a form of agriculture as scientific as mathematics, and the certain and diversified production it insures means the industrial independence of the family unit. The proof of this claim was seen in the fact that there was little hunger or hardship in irrigated districts during the severe depression of 1893. Irrigation means a

large percentage of land ownership. In Massachusetts between 70 and 80 per cent of the people are landless tenants. In irrigated Utah 90 per cent of the people are landed proprietors. Irrigation means small farms and neighborhood association. We point to the colonies of southern California, where the owners and tillers of the soil live close to the school, the church, and the public library, and, in some instances, enjoy the convenience of free-postal delivery. We challenge the world to furnish another example, upon any considerable scale, of conditions which distribute industrial and social advantages so evenly among all the people as is done by the economic life of western America so far as it has yet developed. In order that the nation may utilize this region to the highest advantage, as its natural outlet for surplus energies and increasing population, it is indispensable that citizens of the West should have the earnest cooperation of the American people.

Legislation suited to the peculiar needs of this imperial domain is an urgent necessity.

We declare that it should be the policy of Congress to frame laws which will enable the people to obtain possession of the arid public lands upon terms which bear a fair relation to the cost of reclamation, and that this cost should be regulated by public authority and not left to the determination of unrestricted private enterprise. We declare that works of irrigation, whether built by private enterprise, by community effort, or by the States, should be supervised by some public authority, either State or national, to the end that only works of a proper engineering character shall be constructed and that life and property shall be conserved.

We demand the extension of the policy of forest reservation, begun under the Administration of President Harrison and continued under that of President Cleveland. We recognize that the forests are nature's storage reservoirs, and are thus intimately related to the water supply on which the industrial life of the arid region must forever depend. But the policy referred to does not go far enough. The issue of a proclamation neither prevents nor quenches forest fires, nor stays the ax of those who plunder the public domain of its timber. We reiterate our previous indorsement of the plan proposed by Professor Sargent, of Harvard University, looking to the education of skilled foresters at West Point Academy, the policing of forest reservations by a local guard, and the administration of the system under the Department of War. We note with satisfaction the indorsement of this plan by important commercial bodies in the East, including the New York Chamber of Commerce, and by influential newspapers and magazines throughout the country.

We demand that the reservoir sites, segregated under the act of October 2, 1888, and subsequent legislation, shall be opened to entry for reservoir purposes only, according to the law granting right of way for such purposes. We also demand that the act of March 3, 1891, relating to reservoir sites, shall be so amended as to permit rights of way to date from the filing of application.

We are not prepared to suggest a definite outline in full detail of such national legislation as will ultimately be required to settle the vast and complex problems involved in the complete utilization of the arid public domain. The Fifty-third Congress passed the so-called Carey Act, granting, under certain conditions, 1,000,000 acres of arid land to each of the desert States. This grant has been accepted by six of the eight States to which it applies by legislation which closely accords with the main principles of this declaration.

We ask that the provisions of the Carey Act be immediately extended to the Territories of New Mexico and Arizona. Under this law lands can be opened to settlement as fast as requirements will demand, but there are other problems of great moment which will demand comprehensive and statesmanlike treatment at the hands of Congress. Among these problems are the disposition of the remaining irrigable domain the use and control of the pasturage lands, and the division of the interstate streams. Streams rising in one State and flowing by natural channels through one or more other States are already the subject of dispute, and may be the fruitful source of future disturbance. To adjudicate conflicting rights and equitably divide the waters on which communities naturally depend for industrial purposes is a problem which presents great and perplexing difficulties.

In order that all these subjects may be considered by men of the highest competency, and that a great and effective national policy may be wrought out in time to meet the demands which advancing population and expanding industries will inevitably place upon the arid region, we earnestly ask for the creation of a national irrigation commission, to act under the authority of Congress, to be composed of men familiar with the condition of the arid region, and including a representation of skilled engineers. We would have this commission empowered to use the facilities of the Departments of the Interior, of Agriculture, and of War to the end that its report might embrace a comprehensive plan for the development and administration of the vast and varied interests involved in the public domain.

We also ask for the appointment of an international commission to act in conjunction with the authorities of Mexico and Canada in adjudicating the conflicting rights which have arisen, or may hereafter arise, on streams of an international character.

Resolved, That Congress, at its next session, be most earnestly requested to appropriate \$250,000 for the continuation of the irrigation survey as heretofore carried on under the direction of the Department of the Interior.



